



**Early Childhood  
Specialist**  
*Prospectus*



**STI**  
SOUTHEAST  
TECHNICAL INSTITUTE



6/26/2009

Mark Wilson  
State Director  
Office of Career and Technical Education  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2291

Dear Mark:

Southeast Technical Institute (STI) requests approval to begin an Early Childhood Specialist diploma program and a two-year associate's degree program effective school year 2009-2010. The curriculum would provide graduates with the skills needed to work in school district preschool programs, private preschool centers, childcare centers and Head Start Programs. Graduates would also have the skills and training to open their own daycare centers.

This program will prepare graduates to meet the developmental and education needs of young children with an emphasis on their cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs. Coursework will also provide graduates with training in curriculum development and assessment, diversity and working with parents. South Dakota has the highest percentage of working mothers in the nation and quality childcare is essential to meeting the needs of children, parents and employers.

Please see the enclosed document that provides additional information on this new program. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 367-4875. Thank You.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Jacobsen".

Jim Jacobsen  
Vice President Academic Affairs  
Southeast Technical Institute

Cc: Jeff Holcomb  
Craig Peters  
Pat Bortnem

# Early Childhood Specialist

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## **Early Childhood Specialist Program Description**

The Early Childhood Specialist Program provides graduates with a background for working with children in child care centers, public and private school early childhood programs, preschools, Head Start programs or private childcare centers. Emphasis is placed on the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of young children. The program prepares graduates for the ever changing needs of young children and their families and coursework is taken in curriculum development and implementation, assessment, working with parents and the community, diversity, first aid/health/safety and methods and techniques to work with young children.

## **Rationale for Program Development**

South Dakota has the highest percentage of working mothers in the nation, 77.5%. A recent study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation indicates that South Dakota children younger than age six are in paid child care at twice the national average. Quality childcare and preschool experiences are vital to the social and economic well-being of families and employers. Studies show that quality early education and care help children achieve greater success academically and socially once they enter school. Job opportunities are strong in the early childhood industry. Head Start teachers must have an AAS degree to serve as a lead teacher and recent rule changes for Head Start Programs now require that Head Start educational assistants must also have an AAS degree. The sixteen Head Start programs in South Dakota are looking for opportunities for their teachers and education assistants to earn AAS degrees so that they meet program requirements.

## Course Schedule

### Early Childhood Specialist , AAS Degree

Course #	Course Title	Credits
<b><u>First</u></b>		
SSS 100	Student Success Seminar	2
CPR 101	First Aid/CPR	1
ECH 101	Introduction to Early Childhood	4
ECH 105	Understanding Diversity	3
ECH 110	Child/Health/Safety/Nutrition	3
ENGL 101T	Composition	3
		16
<b><u>Second</u></b>		
CIS 101	Computer Essentials	2
ECH 120	Infant/Toddler Development and Learning (Preq ECH 101)	3
ECH 130	Early Childhood Curriculum I	3
ECH 160	Early Childhood Social/Emotional Guidance	3
MATH 115	College Math	3
PSYC 101T	General Psychology	3
		17
<b><u>Third</u></b>		
ECH 201	Early Language and Literacy	3
ECH 230	Early Childhood Curriculum II (Preq ECH 130)	3
ECH 240	Exceptional Learner	4
PSYC 105	Child Psychology	3
SPCM 101	Fundamentals of Speech	3
		16
<b><u>Fourth</u></b>		
BUS 232	Small Business Entrepreneurship	3
ECH 211	Early Childhood Program Administration	3
ECH 212	Legal & Ethical Issues	2
ECH 222	Internship	6
SOC	Social Science Elective:	3
	SOC 150 - Social Problems, or	17
	SOC 250 - Marriage and the Family	
	TOTAL	66

## Early Childhood Specialist, Diploma

Course #	Course Title	Credits
<b><u>First</u></b>		
SSS 100	Student Success Seminar	2
CPR 101	First Aid/CPR	1
ECH 101	Introduction to Early Childhood	4
ECH 105	Understanding Diversity	3
ECH 110	Child Health/Safety/Nutrition	3
COMM 102	Communications in the Workplace	3
		16
<b><u>Second</u></b>		
CIS 101	Computer Essentials	2
ECH 120	Infant/Toddler Development and Learning (Preq ECH 101)	3
ECH 130	Early Childhood Curriculum I	3
ECH 160	Early Childhood Social/Emotional Guidance	3
ECH 222	Internship	4
		15
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>		<b>31</b>

## **Early Childhood Specialist Course Descriptions – New Courses Only**

### **ECH 101 Introduction to Early Childhood – 4 Credits**

This course provides information on the history and philosophy of Early Childhood Education, educator roles, environments, observations, and issues. It includes an overview of assessment and trends that influence best practices. Career options within the child care profession are explored.

### **ECH 105 – Understanding Diversity – 3 Credits**

This course offers an examination of the influence of culture and environment on the development of infants, toddlers, and young children. The course includes the influences of family diversity and blends theory with practical applications for developing positive family interactions, partnering with parents and other caregivers, increasing parental involvement and development of parent education programs.

### **ECH 110 – Child Health/Safety/Nutrition– 3 Credits**

This course emphasizes how current concepts in health, safety and nutrition relate to the growth and development of a young child. It blends current theory with practical applications and assessments. The course includes the influences of family diversity, child abuse and mental and physical health. In addition, students are introduced to state licensing rules and regulations and federal regulations such as the Head Start Performance Standards that apply to various early childhood settings.

### **ECH 120 – Infant Toddler Development and Learning – 3 Credits**

This course provides an overview of infant and toddler development that prepares students to utilize developmentally appropriate practices in home or center-based settings. It includes the environment, care-giving, teaching strategies, observation methods and family relationships. The course focuses on the whole child in inclusive settings.

### **ECH 130 – Early Childhood Curriculum I – 3 Credits**

This course examines and evaluates early childhood curriculum and methods that lead to the development and implementation of appropriate curricula for young children.

### **ECH 160 –Early Childhood Social/Emotional Guidance – 3 Credits**

This course focuses on effective approaches and positive guidance strategies for supporting the development of young children, emphasizing supportive interactions and developmentally appropriate environments. The course presents a means of assessment to analyze and guide behaviors.

#### ECH 201 – Early Language and Literacy – 3 Credits

This course provides an overview of children's language development, learning environments, and use of appropriate teaching methods to promote children's literacy and language skills in various early childhood settings and programs.

#### ECH 230 – Early Childhood Curriculum II – 3 Credits

This course focuses on the development, implementation and assessment of appropriate environments and curricula for young children. It emphasizes an understanding of children's developmental stages and the creation of appropriate learning opportunities, interactions and environments in areas of dramatic play, art, music and motor skills.

#### ECH 240 – Exceptional Learner – 4 Credits

This course provides an overview of development and learning experiences for children with special needs in integrated child development settings. It discusses developmental needs, developmentally appropriate environments and effective teaching methods.

#### PSYC 105 – Child Psychology – 3 Credits

This course studies the physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and personality development of the child from conception through early childhood.

#### ECH 211 – Early Childhood Program Administration – 3 Credits

This course covers the basic principles involved in the organization and operation of child care centers, early childhood programs operated by public and private schools, Head Start Programs, and private child care programs. The course includes mission statements, funding, insurance, state and federal regulations, managerial functions, employment procedures, business practices, marketing, staffing/supervision and staff and community relations.

#### ECH 212 – Legal and Ethical Issues – 3 Credits

This course is designed to present material to the Early Childhood Specialist about professional ethics and the philosophy, requirements, administration and enforcement of local, state and federal laws related to the profession of early childhood education.

#### ECH 222 – Internship – 6 Credits

This course provides an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in a supervised early childhood setting. It emphasizes professional relationships and behavior, appropriate adult/child interactions, basic curriculum planning and program routines.

## Wage Factor

Additional wage information was obtained from the South Dakota Head Start Association. There are 16 Head Start Programs in South Dakota. New federal requirements mandate that Head Start teachers must have post secondary education in order to serve as classroom teachers. Many school districts in the state also require that educational assistants in early childhood classrooms must have post secondary education. The Sioux Falls School District operates the largest Early Childhood Program in the state serving more than 1200 children. Our Early Childhood Specialist AAS Program will qualify graduates to work as educational assistants.

According to South Dakota Department of Labor Statistics:

	2008 Hourly Average Wage	2008 Annual Average Wage
Preschool Teachers	\$ 13.01	\$ 27,061
Childcare Workers	\$ 9.00	\$ 18,720
Head Start Salary Data:		
Teachers	\$ 13.41	\$ 27,893
Education Assistant	\$ 9.56	\$ 19,885

## Methodology

STI would offer the Early Childhood Specialist Program as a traditional day offering and as a Hybrid program which would combine classes offered in the evening and weekend with some on-line coursework. The Hybrid program would allow students who are working to complete the program.

## Letters of Support - Attached



# SOUTH CENTRAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT, Inc.

401 Walnut SW • Wagner, SD 57380 • (605) 384-3683 • Fax (605) 384-5696

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
RICHARD THALER

**CHAIRPERSON**  
SANDRA VANDENHOEK

June 16, 2009

Jim Jacobsen  
Vice President of Academics  
Southeast Technical Institute  
2320 N Career Avenue  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107

Dear Mr. Jacobsen:

This letter is written in strong support of the proposed Early Childhood Specialist, AAS Degree Program.

As the sponsoring agency of Head Start and the Family Day Care Food Program serving the south central part of the state, we feel that the new program would meet the continuing education and professional development needs of our staff and partnering service provider staff.

In closing we would like to thank you and your staff for your consideration and development of the Early Childhood Degree Program.

Sincerely,

Richard Thaler  
Executive Director

RT/js



# YES

## Youth Enrichment Services

*Changing. Growing. Enriching.*

May 19, 2009

Jim Jacobsen  
VP of Academic Affairs  
Southeast Technical Institute  
2320 N Career Avenue  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107

Dear Jim,

Recently you convened a group of community professionals to help assess the interest and need for an Associate's Degree program for childcare professionals. As the administrator of one of the larger childcare providers in the State, I am delighted that Southeast Technical Institute is investigating this need.

In the 10 years in which I have worked in this field there have been tremendous strides in our understanding of the importance of early childhood, both for the individual and for the community. That understanding also brings elevated expectations and standards for childcare professionals as a whole. In fact, in my three year tenure at Youth Enrichment Services we have elevated requirements for our early childhood staff from no degree or a preference for a CDA to a requirement of a four year degree for Youth Enrichment Services' lead teachers.

The challenge for young people entering this field is that while emotionally satisfying, often the pay barely meets living wage guidelines. This makes a four year degree an unaffordable option for too many of the quality, dedicated individuals who are devoting their careers to caring for our youngest community members. Unless an individual has enough self awareness to make the decision to enter into and earn a four year Early Childhood degree from high school *and* has the financial resources to accomplish that, the options that may lead him or her to that end result are challenging, if not insurmountable. This is unfortunate for both the individual and for the children in his or her care.

Childcare professionals who desire a track that will put them on target to earn a four year degree have very few steps along the way to support their goals. Likewise, if they pursue a CDA certification, in addition to the difficulty of aligning with the State schedules to complete the certification itself, the certification does not 'build' toward a four year degree.

Finally, Youth Enrichment Services employs approximately 130 full and part time childcare professionals; about 45% of whom have a four year degree or who are working toward a four year degree (including Elementary Education). From our Centers alone this means there are potentially more than 50 staff who our organization would strongly encourage – and reward financially – to begin their educational path with an Associate's degree. We strongly encourage and applaud Southeast Tech's efforts to bring this valuable option to our aspiring early childhood professionals.

Sincerely,

Karen Fogas, CEO

824 East 14th Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
605-338-8061 *phone*  
605-338-3739 *fax*

[www.youthenrichment.org](http://www.youthenrichment.org)





## INTER-LAKES COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

PO Box 268 • 111 N Van Eps Ave • Madison, SD 57042 • 605-256-6518 • Fax 605-256-2238 • [www.interlakescap.com](http://www.interlakescap.com)

May 29, 2009

### ICAP Offices

601 4th St Ste 108  
Brookings, SD 57006  
692-6391

201 N Commercial  
Clark, SD 57225  
532-3722

7-8th Avenue SE  
Watertown, SD 57201  
886-7674

Courthouse  
PO Box 616  
Clear Lake, SD 57226  
874-2062

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210 E 5th Ave  
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432-6571

Courthouse  
PO Box 237  
Hayti, SD 57241  
783-3867

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PO Box 254  
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Howard, SD 57349  
772-5712

505 N Western Ave  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
334-2808

112 E Pipestone  
Flandreau, SD 57028  
997-2824

Courthouse  
PO Box 370  
Parker, SD 57053  
940-1909

Jim Jacobson  
Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs  
2320 N. Career Avenue  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107

Mr. Jacobson:

The South Dakota Head Start Association fully supports the idea of providing a two-year Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.

The Head Start community in South Dakota has many staff without a degree. By October 1, 2011 classroom teachers must have at least an AA degree and by September 30, 2013 center teachers must have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education.

Some teachers have been teaching in the classrooms with a Child Development Associate Certificate for many years. With the new requirements of educational levels increasing there is an immediate need for the two-year Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education that will articulate into a four year baccalaureate degree. It is also very important to provide on-line classes. The Head Start staff is working during the day hours and on-line classes would fit perfectly into their schedules.

The SDHSA discussed the need for such a degree and we found that eight Head Start programs would have staff that could participate in this program whether it be teachers or assistant teachers. We highly encourage you to go forward with plans to institute an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Yours For Young Children,

Kathryn Natwick

South Dakota Head Start Association Chair  
[knatwick@interlakescap.com](mailto:knatwick@interlakescap.com)





**Instructional Planning Center**  
201 East Thirty-eighth Street  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57105-5898  
(605) 367-7900

Darin Daby, President  
Kent Alberty, Vice President  
Debbie D. Hoffman, Member  
Doug Morrison, Member  
Dr. Pamela J. Homan, Superintendent

June 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of Southeast Technical Institute regarding their development of an AAS Degree. As one of the largest Head Start programs within the state of South Dakota, we have Educational Assistants currently within our program who would benefit from the availability of classes and the opportunity to obtain this degree locally. This program would also support the development of a qualified work force for future employment.

Within the "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007", Section 648A outlines the requirements for teachers and classroom education assistants within the Head Start classroom.

(B) ADDITIONAL STAFF – The Secretary shall ensure that, not later than September 30, 2013, all --

- (ii) Head Start teaching assistants nationwide in center-based programs have –
  - (I) at least a child development associate credential;
  - (II) enrolled in a program leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree; or
  - (III) enrolled in a child development associate credential program to be completed within 2 years.

As a program, we value having a highly qualified workforce. We continue to look for ways to support our current staff in meeting the staff qualification requirements as a result of the Head Start Act for continued employment, continued development of their own skills, and program compliance. The development of the AAS program at Southeast Technical Institute will provide one alternative for these staff to meet the requirements and continue their education to a higher level should they choose to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie A. Peters", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Valerie A. Peters  
Early Childhood Coordinator  
Sioux Falls School District  
201 E. 38<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
605-367-7949

Curriculum Services	Special Services	Finance Office	Instructional Support Services	Superintendent/Human Resources
FAX (605) 367-7906	FAX (605) 367-4638	FAX (605) 367-7906	FAX (605) 367-4528	FAX (605) 367-4637

Relay Services for Hearing Impaired: Dial 711, then the desired number.